

A FEW GOOD MEN 1 & 2



BIG IDEA: Perhaps Don O'Briant, in his article "The American Male's Emasculated Self-Image," best summarized the dilemma facing men today.

It's not easy being a man in the '90s. Two decades of divorce frenzy, absent fathers, changing attitudes and blurred gender roles have left American males *more confused than ever* about their self-image. Should they eat quiche? Should they act macho? Or should they wander into the woods to beat drums and hug each other?

Time was, boys could look to their fathers or to the movies for role models to define their masculinity. But lately there are disturbing trends in our choice of male icons, says Frank Pittman in his book, *Man Enough: Fathers, Sons, and the Search for Masculinity*:

I think it's gotten worse. Clearly. *boys and young males today do not know what men and masculinity are really like.* They are modeling themselves after cartoonish action heroes and perennially alienated kids.

There is a good chance that your group members have been influenced in varying degrees by disturbing trends. As Christian men, we need to believe what God and His Word say are correct models for manhood, and seek to allow God to work in our lives to cultivate a biblically based concept of masculinity.

In these studies, we will explore four of these attributes--compassion, character, cooperation and courage--as we focus on Timothy and Epaphroditus, two ordinary males who became outstanding men.



DESIRED LIFE CHANGE: As a result of these studies, your group will begin to: 1) recognize false images of manhood, and 2) discern their individual part and God's part in the process of becoming a man.



AUDIENCE: These lessons are designed for male students who are desiring to develop a biblically based male self-concept.



LEADER'S PREPARATION: The student lessons are designed to be worked through in a group setting. Work through each study using the leader's guide, taking extra time to examine the biblical passages. Become familiar with Philippians 2 as each lesson is developed from this passage. Some brief background reading on Timothy (particularly 1 and 2 Timothy) and Epaphroditus would be beneficial. For a helpful preparation resource, see *Unger's Bible Dictionary*.



AT A GLANCE

As your group interacts in these studies, they will observe . . .

This is my **WORLD:** The models for manhood society presents me are confusing and ambiguous.

This is my **NEED:** In light of this confusion and ambiguity, I have a need to develop a proper biblically based concept of masculinity.

This is my **ANSWER:** Choose to follow the ideals of manhood God presents in His Word.

This is the **DIFFERENCE:** Following God's model for manhood gives me clarity and direction as to proper models of maleness, manhood and masculinity.

This is what I'll **DO:** I will seek to cultivate these aspects of manhood as I follow the Lord and allow Him to develop these qualities in my life.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - WHY IS THIS STUDY IMPORTANT?



It's certainly true that the three false images of manhood taken from Weldon Hardenbrook's book *Missing from Action: Vanishing Manhood in America* are extreme examples. But the bad news is the extreme confusion in our culture today of what it means to be male, masculine or manly. The good news is that we don't need to be confused if we listen to God and His Word.

This confusion can affect the male students in your movement in many ways. For instance, a poorly developed male concept might be characterized by

students who lack energy, drive, initiative, goals or purpose. On the other hand, students who possess a clearly defined male identity are easily identifiable: ... have direction, and are confident, life-giving ... [relational, decisive, and trustworthy.]


So how do we become men? It is a two-part process of recognizing OUR PART (i.e., the ability to choose the right models by rejecting the models that our society presents and accepting God's models), and GOD'S PART (i.e., allowing Him to cultivate these attributes and qualities in our lives).

1 ASK: How would you describe the following men? (Not the actors themselves, but rather the characters they portray.) Have your group briefly share their responses with each other.

2 READ: The following blurbs regarding these entertainers.

3 ASK: What can you conclude about the perspectives each of them has toward their maleness?
 - They feel more comfortable in a different identity.
 - It may give them a sense of uniqueness or significance, or safety and security as they relate to their world.

5 ASK: What can you conclude about how our society views maleness?
 - Much confusion
 - Not many good role models or examples of manhood
 - Much ambiguity


VERSION 2.1

A FEW GOOD MEN 1

TIMOTHY—"NO ONE ELSE LIKE HIM"

DESCRIBE THE FOLLOWING MEN:*

<p>MACHO MANIAC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Never show emotion - Characterized by rage, anger, revenge, hatred and meanness - Never settles with words anything that could be settled with a gun or rocket-propelled grenades 	<p>GREAT PRETENDER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sarcastic - Cynical - Critical - Belittles others
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Rambo

Jean Claude van Damme

Rodney Dangerfield

Clint Eastwood

GENDER BLENDER

Michael Jackson

Prince

PEOPLE magazine published an interview between a psychologist and her seven-year-old nephew. The child was asked, "Is Michael Jackson a boy or a girl?" The child responded, "Both!"

NAMES OFFERED FOR . . . THAT GUY (Minneapolis)—What's in a name? A lot of publicity for the former Prince, whose decision to change his name to an unpronounceable symbol is keeping everyone guessing about what the pop star will call himself.

That Sign Guy, HeShe, Purple prima donna, and Andy—short for Androgynous—are among suggestions made by more than 400 people who have called the *Star Tribune* newspaper, which invited readers to name that Prince.

The rock star announced last week he wants to be referred to with the symbol combining the signs for male and female. It's also the name of his latest album. -from the *Daily Coloradoan*, June 24, 1993.

THE FLEXIBLE MAN. "I date men and I date women. What Woody Allen said was true. Say what you will about bisexuality; you have a 50 percent better chance of finding a date on Saturday night."
 -Hollywood mogul David Geffen

THOUGHTS

"It's not easy being a man in the '90s. Two decades of divorce frenzy, absent fathers, changing attitudes and blurred gender roles have left *American males more confused than ever* about their self-image. Should they eat quiche? Should they act macho? Or should they wander into the woods to beat drums and hug each other?"
 Don O'Briant, "The American Male's Emasculated Self-Image," *Orlando Sentinel*, August 18, 1993.

SUMMARIZE

Our society's view of maleness.

TOOLBOX

- THINK
- OBSERVE
- CLOSE-UP
- WRITE
- DISCUSS
- FEELINGS
- BRAINSTORM
- REFERENCE
- PASSAGE
- ARTICLE
- BIG IDEA
- CROSSROAD

*Adapted from *Missing From Action: Vanishing Manhood in America* by Weldon Hardenbrook, (Thomas Nelson, 1987).

1 TRANSITION STATEMENT: Although these are extreme examples, they point to the fact that there is much confusion in our culture today as to what it means to be male, masculine or manly. This confusion can affect us as Christian men either subtly or directly.

2 ASK & DISCUSS

3 TRANSITION STATEMENT: This confusion appears to be bad news. The good news is that we don't have to be confused if we listen to what God's Word has to say. He shows us through men on whom He has put His stamp of approval. Let's look at Timothy, an ordinary male who became an outstanding man.

6 READ

7 READ

- a. "my true child ... my beloved son"; suggests the closeness and intimacy of their relationship.
- b. Youthful, encourages to be an example
- c. Timid by nature
- d. Endured hardship

BRAINSTORM

How might this confusion affect you as a college student?

- I might put on a "hard exterior" in order to appear tough.
- Since "image is everything," I might seek to impress others rather than honor God. I can become a people-pleaser rather than a God-pleaser.
- I could become me-centered vs. others-centered.
- I see that there are few, if any, examples or role models to follow.
- I could act as if I am not accountable to anyone but myself.

4 READ

TIMOTHY—"NO ONE ELSE LIKE HIM"

LIFE STORY—TIMOTHY

- Mentioned 25 times in the Bible
- Approximately 20 years old
- Frequently encouraged by Paul
- Church planter, missionary

PHILIPPIANS 2:19-24

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you.

20 I have **no one else like him**, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.

21 For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.

22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.

23 I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me.

24 And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

1 AND 2 TIMOTHY

The epistles which bear Timothy's name were intended to encourage him and strengthen him for the tremendous task which Paul had charged him. The occasion for writing the epistles explores the need to maintain the faith in order to ensure the continuity of the Church of Jesus Christ.

5 DISCUSS

FOR A FURTHER LOOK

What else do we learn about Timothy from the following verses?

- a. 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 2:1
- b. 1 Timothy 4:12
- c. 2 Timothy 1:7
- d. 2 Timothy 2:3

PHILIPPIANS 2

Philippians is the most personal of all the epistles of Paul that were not written to individuals. In chapter two, he writes about two servants of God—Timothy and Epaphroditus—whose manner of life the believer is to follow.

1 BRAINSTORM

2 TRANSITION STATEMENT:

Two key elements of Timothy's character stand out:

1) he took a genuine interest in the church at Philippi, and 2) he proved himself.

3 DISCUSS: What did Paul mean by his use of these phrases?

4 ASK: In what ways can you observe these two qualities in Timothy?

He possessed a unique blend of character and compassion, of being tough yet tender. You get a picture of balance and completeness. Although he was young, Timothy was used by God because of the choices he made.

5 ASK

6 LIST: The group's responses.

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OBSERVATIONS: TRUTHS ABOUT TIMOTHY

List some facts about Timothy that you observe from this passage.

- Sent by Paul
- A kindred spirit
- Concerned for the church
- Had worth
- Served faithfully in the past

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WORD STUDY

"GENUINE INTEREST"

Key idea: COMPASSION

- Care, protect
- Watch over
- Take responsibility for

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WORD STUDY

"PROVED"

Key idea: CHARACTER

- Faithful
- Dependable
- Reliable

Seen in Timothy then:	Seen in Timothy then:
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="font-size: 0.8em; margin-right: 5px;">🧠 🖋️</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Took responsibility to care for people - He stood out and was unique because he alone took a genuine interest in those around him at Philippi. </div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="font-size: 0.8em; margin-right: 5px;">🧠 🖋️</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possessed strength, tenacity, and resolve in the face of hardship - Committed - Faithful in follow-through and delegated tasks </div>
<p style="font-size: 0.8em;">If Timothy were a student today here at our school, how might he demonstrate...</p>	
<p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Compassion?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He would attend events wanting to serve rather than come for self-serving needs. - He would do things "behind the scenes" even if no one noticed or there was no one to impress. - Share the Gospel 	<p style="font-size: 0.8em;">Character?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - He would not indulge friends in their sin. - He would be diligent in following-through with delegated tasks.

- 1 **TRANSITION STATEMENT:** We see that becoming a man is a two-part process that involves our part and God's part.
- 3 **ASK & DISCUSS:** What do these two verses reveal to us about God's part in the process?

2 **READ**

Remember . . . we are male by birth, men by choice.
In choosing to become a man, we need to recognize . . .

OUR PART

Choose the right models

CHANGING MODELS FOR MANHOOD

Reject wrong models Accept God's model

GOD'S PART

Philippians 1:6—Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:13—For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

LIFE INTERSECTION

To what degree does my life presently reflect God's model of these two qualities?

COMPASSION

← Never	Always →
My interests	Others' interests

For whom can I demonstrate compassion? How?

Pursue a non-Christian friend for lunch this week in order to have a chance to share Christ with him.

Seek ways to serve the other guys in my small group.

CHARACTER

← Never	Always →
Leave me out	Depend on me

Where do I need to demonstrate character? How?

Be faithful in setting up evangelistic appointments with guys on my hall.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the *New International Version*, ©1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Published by Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

4 **THOUGHTS**
Just for them

5 **LIFE APPLICATION**

L E A D E R ' S R E S O U R C E



BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Men at the Crossroads – Jack Balswick (*InterVarsity*)

The Real Man Inside – Verne Becker (*Zondervan*)

Father and Son – Gordon Dalbey (*Thomas Nelson*)

Men Under Construction – Donald M. Joy (*Victor*)

The Hidden Value of a Man – Gary Smalley and John Trent (*Focus on the Family*)

Using This Study To Help Others

The purpose of your small group involves applying the Word to your life and using the truth of the Bible to reach out to others. Here is one possible way you and your group can take the principles from the Manhood Bible studies to those your group is trying to reach. The following idea is an attempt to have you take the principle of courage and put it into action.

Make a list of students in your target audience (or personal ministry area) with whom you would feel most hesitant to share the gospel. First, commit yourselves to pray for them. Second, develop a plan of action for sharing the gospel with each of the students for whom you are praying.

You may want to come up with a similar plan to take action on the principle of compassion. Are there ways you can show compassion to the students you are trying to reach? Again, make a prayer list and develop a plan of action. Feel free to brainstorm other possibilities.

Develop other action plans for the areas of cooperation and character.

O V E R V I E W O F M E E T I N G T I M E



Planning your group session

Allocating your time

INTERACTION AS A GROUP	INTERACTION WITH THE STUDY & WORD	INTERACTION WITH GOD	UPCOMING INFORMATION	OTHER IDEAS
Ice breaker? Refreshments?	Provided. Add personal story?	Worship / Praise / Prayer time?	Next meeting? Special event?	Music / Video?
_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.

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